

DRAFT 208 Water Quality Management Plan April 2010

I. Introduction

In 1972, the United States Congress enacted legislation that provided a national strategy for cleaning up the nation's waters. This legislation, known as the Clean Water Act, created a national goal of "fishable-swimmable waters" in the United States. Among other planning activities, Section 208 of the Act was developed for the purpose of encouraging and facilitating the development and implementation of area-wide wastewater management plans. It required governors to identify areas with water quality problems and designate an entity to develop area-wide wastewater management plans.

In 1975, the Governor of South Carolina designated five Councils of Governments (COGs) as planning agencies for five regions of the State, which, as a result of urbanization, among other factors, had substantial water quality issues. In 2004, the Lowcountry COG was designated as a planning agency, bringing the total number of designated planning agencies in the State to six. The six planning agencies are:

- Appalachian Council of Governments
- Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments
- Central Midlands Council of Governments
- Lowcountry Council of Governments
- Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments
- Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments

These six COGs are responsible for planning in 24 of the State's 46 counties. The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) is designated as the planning agency for the remaining 22 counties known as the non-designated area of the State. At the time planning agencies were designated, the non-designated area consisted of rural or small urban communities where significant water quality problems were not likely to exist. However, the non-designated area now includes municipalities that have experienced significant growth including Florence, Orangeburg, Aiken, Greenwood and Sumter.

Since the seven planning agencies, including DHEC, first completed their respective management plans in 1979, these plans have been updated periodically. In 1994 and again in 2009, the designated planning agencies agreed to update all or part of their plans. This current plan update replaces the State's Water Quality Management Plan for the non-designated area dated October 1997 and incorporates any planning activities that are currently being used for facilities planning. It provides a systematic approach to protecting water quality by outlining policies that guide the wastewater infrastructure permitting process.